United Nations E/2003/L.8

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
12 June 2003

Original: English

Substantive session of 2003
Geneva, 30 June-25 July 2003
Item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme

Extract from the report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on its 2003 annual session (2-6 and 9 June 2003)

Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session of 2003

Contents

Decision		*Page*
2003/6	Draft country programme documents	2
2003/7	Increase of other resources ceiling for intercountry programmes for 2002-2003	3
2003/8	Establishment of an operational reserve	3
2003/9	The UNICEF recovery policy	3
2003/10	UNICEF experience of joint programming	4

* E/2003/100.

03-39518 (E) 270603

2003/6. Draft country programme documents

The Executive Board

Approves the aggregate indicative budgets for the following country programmes of cooperation:

Region/country	Period	Regular resources	Other resources	Document E/ICEF/2003/
Eastern and Southern Africa				
Angola	2004	5 537 000	18 400 000	P/L.1
Kenya	2004-2008	24 659 000	32 500 000	P/L.2
Madagascar	2004	4 099 000	4 850 000	P/L.3
Somalia	2004-2008	22 770 000	80 000 000	P/L.4
West and Central Africa				
Benin	2004-2008	9 426 000	16 000 000	P/L.5
Congo	2004-2008	4 879 000	7 500 000	P/L.6
Niger	2004-2007	25 024 000	26 494 000	P/L.7
Sierra Leone	2004-2007	11 794 000	16 000 000	P/L.8
Ecuador	2004-2008	3 912 000	10 000 000	P/L.9
East Asia and the Pacific				
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	2004-2006	3 310 000	9 000 000	P/L.10
Philippines	2004	2 198 000	5 000 000	P/L.11
South Asia				
Pakistan	2004-2008	61 616 000	65 000 000	P/L.12
Middle East and North Africa				
Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territory	2004-2005	3 200 000	9 230 000	P/L.13

Annual session
3-4 June 2003

2003/7. Increase of other resources ceiling for intercountry programmes for 2002-2003

The Executive Board

Approves an increase of $100 million in the other resources ceiling for intercountry programmes, from $203 million to $303 million, for the 2002-2003 biennium, as contained in document E/ICEF/2003/P/L.14.

Annual session
4 June 2003

2003/8. Establishment of an operational reserve

The Executive Board

Recommends that UNICEF continue to manage its liquidity in accordance with the liquidity requirement approved by the Executive Board and that it not establish a funded operational reserve, as described in document E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.4.

Annual session
4 June 2003

2003/9. The UNICEF recovery policy

The Executive Board,

Having reviewed the UNICEF recovery policy, as contained in document E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.1, and the document E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.5 submitted at the present session,

1. *Stresses* that regular resources, *inter alia*, because of their untied nature, are the bedrock of the operational activities of UNICEF and, in this regard, *notes* with serious concern the stagnation of regular resources available to UNICEF;

2. *Requests* that all donors strive to increase contributions to regular resources and *requests* the Executive Director to hold consultations to encourage donors to increase the proportion of contributions to regular resources;

3. *Endorses* the objectives that other resources support the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) priorities and that regular resources should not subsidize the support costs for other resources programmes, and *encourages* UNICEF to apply procedures that reduce transaction costs for other resources programmes;

4. *Endorses* the aim of eliminating, in the medium term, the subsidy of support costs for other resources programmes by regular resources;

5. *Calls* on those donors contributing to other resources to consider directing these contributions to thematic areas;[1]

[1] The thematic areas are the five MTSP priority areas (immunization plus, girls' education, child protection, HIV/AIDS, early childhood development) and humanitarian assistance.

6. *Calls* further on all donors to simplify their administrative and reporting requirements to significantly reduce the administrative costs of their contributions to other resources;

7. *Decides* to apply, as an interim measure, the methodology as described in paragraph 13 of document E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.1 and in its annex II. The methodology will be reviewed by the Executive Board in light of the harmonization discussion among the United Nations agencies;

8. *Authorizes* the Executive Director to apply the following rates[2] to all new agreements to be signed after Executive Board approval of the revised policy on an interim basis:

(a) 5 per cent for all resources raised from the private sector in the programme countries;

(b) For other private sector resources, 5 per cent for thematic contributions and 7 per cent for non-thematic contributions;

(c) For other contributions to thematic areas, 8 per cent, and an additional reduction of 1 per cent for 90 per cent up-front payments;

(d) For non-thematic contributions, 12 per cent and additional reductions of 1 per cent for 90 per cent up-front payment, 1 per cent for contributions over $500,000, 2 per cent for contributions over $2 million, 3 per cent for contributions over $10 million, and, as a transitional arrangement through 2004, 4 per cent for contributions over $40 million;

9. *Recognizes* that the rates approved above constitute a step towards the reduction of the subsidy of the support costs of other resources programmes by regular resources;

10. *Requests* the Executive Director to bring the issue of the recovery policy to the attention of the working group on harmonization and simplification of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) with a view to harmonizing the methodology used by the UNDG members in devising their recovery policies;

11. *Requests* the Executive Director to report to the Executive Board on the experiences of the recovery policy, especially on actual cost recovery achieved and recovery rates applied to projects during this period, on its effects on the regular resources, as well as on the harmonization efforts undertaken, and to submit proposals for further steps towards the elimination of any remaining subsidy of support costs of other resources programmes by regular resources at the second regular session of the Executive Board in 2005 for a review of this interim policy.

Annual session
5 June 2003

2003/10. UNICEF experience of joint programming

The Executive Board

1. *Recognizes* the commitment of UNICEF to making an effective contribution to a number of reform initiatives, including the reform programme of the Secretary-General, as endorsed by the General Assembly, and the provisions of the triennial comprehensive policy review as set out in General Assembly resolution 56/201 of 21 December 2001;

[2] All incentive reductions are applicable to annual contributions.

2. *Notes* the progress UNICEF is making, as set out in the Executive Director's annual report to the Economic and Social Council (E/ICEF/2003/4 (Part I)), on working with the Common Country Assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and also towards the simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures,[1] with a view to enhancing programme delivery;

3. *Reaffirms,* in this context, the aim of reducing the complexities and diversity of requirements which continue to place an enormous burden on programme countries through high transaction costs, and that innovations in this area should achieve, in their implementation, the objective of reducing the administrative and financial costs to programme countries;

4. *Requests,* therefore, the Executive Director to submit to the Executive Board for consideration at its annual session in 2004 a written report containing an assessment, based on specific country examples, of the UNICEF experience of joint programming and other innovative and collaborative approaches aimed at improving programming effectiveness and reducing transaction costs for programme countries, and their associated costs and benefits.

Annual session
5 June 2003

[1] As defined in resolution 56/201, section VI.

E/2003/L.9

Readex
Fiche

United Nations E/2003/L.9

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
27 June 2003

Original: English

Substantive session of 2003
Geneva, 30 June-25 July 2003
Item 2 of the provisional agenda*
Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development

Draft ministerial declaration of the high-level segment submitted by the President of the Council on the basis of informal consultations

1. We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations participating in the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2003 of the Economic and Social Council, held from 30 June to 2 July 2003:

(a) Having considered the theme "Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development", the report of the Secretary-General on the subject[1] and the contribution of all the participants, including civil society, in the preparatory process of the high-level segment, held on 24 March and 30 April 2003;

(b) Recalling the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences, summits and relevant special sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, including the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, as well as the World Food Summit, held in Rome in 1996, and their five-year reviews, the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2002, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002;

(c) Taking note of the fact that rural areas of developing countries are home to three quarters of the world's poor and that insufficient progress has been made in recent years in addressing the issues of poverty, hunger and malnutrition;

(d) Recalling the commitment to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration;

* E/2003/100.

03-41123 (E) 300603

(e) Recalling also General Assembly resolution 57/270 B of 20 December 2002, entitled "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields";

Have adopted the following declaration.

2. We are convinced that eradication of rural poverty and hunger is crucial for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. Rural development should be an integral part of national and international development policies, including bilateral donor response strategies and the activities and programmes of the United Nations system.

3. We express our serious concern regarding the famine facing millions of people, especially in Africa. Recognizing that food security is a global concern, we are committed to respond to the internationally recognized emergency food aid needs and to improve famine prevention mechanisms and long-term food security.

4. Rural development should be pursued through an integrated approach, encompassing the economic, social and environmental dimensions, taking into account the gender perspective and consisting of mutually reinforcing policies and programmes. This approach should be balanced, targeted, situation specific, locally owned, include local synergies and initiatives and be responsive to the needs of rural populations.

5. Rural development is the responsibility of each country and is predicated on an enabling national environment. An enabling international economic environment is important to support effective national development efforts, including rural development efforts. An enabling environment combines effective and coherent policies, good governance and accountable institutions at national and international levels as well as the promotion of gender equality and the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development. Robust, broad-based and equitable economic growth as well as human resource development are needed to fight rural poverty.

6. In this regard, despite serious efforts to achieve progress, important issues in the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration of the World Trade Organization, adopted at Doha on 20 November 2001,[2] are still outstanding, in particular regarding the commitments under the said declaration for, inter alia, comprehensive negotiations aimed at substantial improvements in market access. In the agricultural sector, without prejudging the outcome of negotiations, reductions of, with a view to phasing out, all forms of export subsidies, substantial reduction in trade-distorting domestic support and enhanced market access is needed. We recall that special and differential treatment for developing countries shall be an integral part of all elements of the negotiations and shall be embodied in the schedules of concessions and commitments and, as appropriate, in the rules and disciplines to be negotiated, so as to be operationally effective and to enable developing countries to effectively take account of their development needs, including food security and rural development. We take note of the non-trade concerns reflected in the negotiating proposals submitted by members and confirm that non-trade concerns will be taken into account in the negotiations, as provided for in the Agreement of Agriculture.

7. As for non-agricultural products, we call for reduction or, as appropriate, removal of non-tariff barriers, tariff peaks, high tariffs and tariff escalation to enhance market access, in particular for products of export interest to developing countries.

8. These matters must be urgently addressed by members of the World Trade Organization in order to ensure full implementation of the Doha Ministerial Declaration, including issues with regard to implementation and special and differential treatment, and to contribute to the success of the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization to be held in Cancun, Mexico, in September 2003.

9. We invite members of the World Trade Organization to implement the commitments regarding trade-related technical assistance and capacity-building for developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, so that they can benefit from liberalized trade opportunities and adopt measures to reduce supply-side constraints, including by improving productivity and product diversification and enhancing competitiveness and community-based entrepreneurial capacity. We urge the members of the World Trade Organization to facilitate the accession of developing countries to the Organization, in particular the least developed countries and countries with economies in transition, taking into account the individual level of development of each country that applies for membership. In this regard, we welcome the recent agreement of the Organization to facilitate the accession of the least developed countries.

10. We recognize the vulnerability of the commodity-dependent developing countries, in particular the low-income countries, to market fluctuations and stress the need to support their efforts for the diversification of exports as a means of increasing export earnings and improving terms of trade and to address the impact of the instability of commodity prices. In this context, it is very important to empower commodity producers in developing countries to insure themselves against risk. We underscore the need for reforming the existing facilities to respond to the needs of the rural poor.

11. We urge developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts towards achieving the target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product as official development assistance to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national product as official development assistance to least developed countries, as reconfirmed at the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, and we encourage developing countries to build on progress achieved in ensuring that official development assistance is used effectively to help achieve development goals and targets. We acknowledge the efforts of all donors, commend those donors whose official development assistance contributions exceed, reach or are increasing towards the targets and underline the importance of undertaking an examination of the means and time frames for achieving those targets and goals.

12. Food security, rural and agricultural development must be adequately addressed in the context of national development and poverty planning as well as in multilateral and bilateral donor response strategies. To that end, we deem it necessary to increase productive investment in rural and agricultural development to achieve lasting food security. We take note with satisfaction of the undertakings made by the members of the Group of Eight, as contained in the Action Plan against Famine, especially in Africa, adopted in Evian, France, on 3 June 2003, to work

towards reversing the decline of official development assistance to agriculture and increasing trade opportunities for developing countries.

13. External debt relief can play a key role in liberating resources that can then be directed towards activities consistent with attaining sustainable growth and development. Debt relief measures should, therefore, where appropriate, be pursued vigorously and expeditiously, including within the Paris and London Clubs and other relevant forums. Noting the importance of re-establishing financial viability for those developing countries facing unsustainable debt burdens, we welcome the initiatives that have been undertaken to reduce outstanding indebtedness and invite further national and international measures in that regard, including, as appropriate, debt cancellation and other arrangements.

14. We are committed to empowering poor women and men to play a full and effective role in their development by enabling them to have a larger voice in decision-making processes, including: resource allocation; promoting mechanisms, including the self-organization of poor people, to influence the market and public policies; and ensuring that poor rural people and their organizations have the opportunity to participate fully in the design, development and implementation of rural development strategies and programmes.

15. We are also committed to the empowerment of rural women at all levels and in all aspects of rural development, including agriculture, nutrition and food security, and to ensuring that the work of women is recognized and valued. We will ensure women's equal access to land, property, adequate housing, economic opportunity, credit, education, skills training and health care, economic welfare, the right to inheritance and the right to take part in contractual agreements, as well as empowerment through full participation in decision-making at all levels.

16. We call for greater access to financial services and labour markets for the rural poor, in particular women, indigenous people and vulnerable groups, and to this end we undertake to simplify existing mechanisms and to facilitate the establishment and strengthening of rural financial institutions, including micro-credit, savings and insurance facilities and cooperative ventures for rural development, as well as the development of professional associations and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

17. We resolve to promote broad-based economic growth in developing countries and countries with economies in transition by strengthening sustainable agricultural and food policies, improving agricultural productivity, including for basic food commodities, and fostering non-farm rural economic activities.

18. We further resolve to enhance the livelihood of the rural poor by aiming to ensure that they have access to adequate quantities of safe and nutritious food and by creating productive and remunerative on- and off-farm employment opportunities, including through the diversification of the rural economy and employment-generating strategies. In this regard, we will encourage South-South cooperation, including the sharing of experiences and best practices.

19. We reaffirm that sustainable agriculture and rural development are essential to the implementation of an integrated approach to food security and safety in an environmentally sustainable way. We recognize the important role of rural populations in sustainably managing natural resources, including biodiversity, and in combating desertification and land degradation. We pledge to promote

environmentally sound and sustainable natural resources management, including the implementation of integrated land management, sustainable forest management programmes and water-use plans and the use of traditional and indigenous knowledge and practices as well as modern technologies of sustainable resource use and management. We also acknowledge the need, subject to national legislation, to implement actions at all levels to recognize the rights of local and indigenous communities that are holders of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices and, with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices, to develop and implement benefit-sharing mechanisms on mutually agreed terms for their use.

20. We commit ourselves to strengthening the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa and to addressing the causes of desertification and land degradation, in order to maintain and restore land, as well as poverty resulting from land degradation.

21. We recognize the key role of alternative development strategies for sustainable development of the rural areas affected by the illicit cultivation of narcotic plants and call for the promotion of such strategies.

22. We call for concrete steps at both the national and international levels to mobilize public and private investment as well as to enhance access to credit for the development of the physical rural infrastructure in order to enhance productivity and improve access to markets and information.

23. We recognize that research and its effective application are crucial for the development and implementation of appropriate new technologies that are pro-poor and raise on- and off-farm productivity. To that end, we underline the need for measures to increase investment in agricultural research, including modern technologies, natural resources management and capacity-building. We also call for measures to enhance and expand access to information and communication technologies in the rural areas of developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

24. We recognize the crucial importance of enhanced access of the rural poor, women and men, to productive assets, in particular land and water, and stress that priority attention should be given to the adoption of policies and the implementation of laws that guarantee well-defined and enforceable land- and water-use rights and promote legal security of tenure, recognizing the existence of different national laws and/or systems of land access and tenure.

25. We also call for enhanced access to social services for poor people in rural and remote areas. We are committed to improving access to quality education for the rural poor, especially the girl child, through increased investment and full utilization of modern techniques and technologies, including the establishment of remote education systems.

26. We recognize the critical link between HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, cholera, typhus and other serious diseases and rural development, as well as their negative impact on the agricultural sector. We also recognize the importance of health, including reproductive health, to: rural development and the eradication of poverty; reducing infant, child and maternal mortality; combating HIV/AIDS; and promoting equality and empowerment among the rural poor, especially women.

27. We emphasize that full implementation of the Declaration on the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and public health, adopted by the World Trade Organization at Doha on 20 November 2001,[3] including its paragraph 6, is important for tackling public health problems, especially those resulting from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other epidemics.

28. We are deeply concerned about the devastating impact of the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, which undermines efforts to eradicate poverty. We recognize that HIV/AIDS has serious debilitating consequences for societies, particularly in Africa. We are therefore committed to the mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS concerns into rural development planning, including poverty eradication and food security strategies and multisectoral development activities covering economic and social aspects, taking into account the particular situation of rural women.

29. Bearing in mind that the majority of indigenous people live in rural areas, we recognize the need to implement policies and programmes to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development that are focused on them, taking into account their traditional knowledge and their special relationship with the land.

30. We reaffirm the goal of expanding access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, particularly in the rural areas of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and express our resolve to the expeditious realization of that goal, in accordance with the commitments contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.[4]

31. We also reaffirm the need to improve access to reliable, affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound energy services and resources, taking into account national specificities and circumstances, through various means, such as enhanced rural electrification and decentralized energy systems, increased use of renewables, cleaner liquid and gaseous fuels and enhanced energy efficiency, as well as by intensifying regional and international cooperation in support of national efforts, including through capacity-building, financial and technological assistance and innovative financing mechanisms, including at the micro- and meso-levels, recognizing the specific factors for providing access to the poor.

32. We undertake to promote rural-urban linkages by developing and strengthening a system of intermediate-size secondary and tertiary towns to stimulate rural development, as well as to minimize the negative impacts of rural-urban migration. At the same time, we will encourage programmes and policies designed to strengthen rural service centre and small town systems, including strengthening institutions and mechanisms for local or regional planning.

33. We are committed to responding effectively to Africa's special needs for achieving sustainable development and to lending our full support to the development and implementation of national policies and programmes for rural development in Africa. To this end, we reiterate our support for the priorities of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the call to channel financial, technical and other types of resources towards the priorities of the New Partnership, in particular infrastructural development, health services, education, water and agriculture. We underline the importance of implementing the initiatives contained in the New Partnership, in particular those designed to enhance market access and

the diversification of production in African economies, which are vulnerable because of their dependence on primary production and natural resources-based sectors.

34. We recognize the special needs of the least developed countries and reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of outcomes of the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, in particular the elements related to rural development, enhanced market access and provision for enhanced technical assistance and support for capacity-building.

35. Recognizing also the special challenges in rural development faced by small island developing States, we reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and emphasize in this regard the importance of the international meeting to be held in Mauritius in 2004. Noting also that the geographical situation of the landlocked developing countries is an added constraint on their efforts to promote rural development, we call for the implementation of specific actions related to the particular needs of those countries.

36. We underline the importance of partnerships at the national and international levels to foster collaboration among actors in different sectors. At the national and local levels, we will encourage local authorities, civil society, the private sector and local communities to launch partnerships that support and promote rural development. At the international level, we will facilitate and nurture alliances of Governments, donors, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector for the promotion of integrated rural development.

37. We welcome the work of the organizations of the United Nations system in eradicating rural poverty and promoting rural development and urge them to ensure that measures are implemented to simplify, harmonize and integrate assessment procedures and programming so as to reduce transaction costs and avoid additional procedural requirements for programme countries and enhance support for their efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, especially those contained in the Millennium Declaration. We emphasize that national and international poverty reduction strategies should target rural areas and households more systematically by integrating poverty eradication and food security as well as environmental objectives more firmly in poverty reduction strategy papers, where they exist, as well as in common country assessments and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. We urge the international and regional financial institutions to enhance their support for rural poverty eradication and rural development in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

38. We commit ourselves to the implementation of the present declaration and call upon civil society, the organizations of the United Nations system and other relevant actors and organizations to lend their full support to the realization of the objectives of integrated rural development for poverty eradication and sustainable development. We agree to review progress or lack thereof in the implementation of the present declaration at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in 2005.

Notes

[1] E/2003/51.

[2] WT/MIN(01)/DEC/1.

[3] Ibid., DEC/2.

[4] ***Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002*** (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

E/2003/L.9*

Readex
Fiche

United Nations E/2003/L.9*

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
3 July 2003

Original: English

Substantive session of 2003
Geneva, 30 June-25 July 2003
Item 2 of the provisional agenda**
Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development

Draft ministerial declaration of the high-level segment submitted by the President of the Council on the basis of informal consultations

1. We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations participating in the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2003 of the Economic and Social Council, held from 30 June to 2 July 2003:

(a) Having considered the theme "Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development", the report of the Secretary-General on the subject[1] and the contribution of all the participants, including civil society, in the preparatory process of the high-level segment, held on 24 March and 30 April 2003;

(b) Recalling the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences, summits and relevant special sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, including the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, as well as the World Food Summit, held in Rome in 1996, and their five-year reviews, the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2002, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002;

(c) Taking note of the fact that rural areas of developing countries are home to three quarters of the world's poor and that insufficient progress has been made in recent years in addressing the issues of poverty, hunger and malnutrition;

(d) Recalling the commitment to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration;

---

* Reissued for technical reasons.
** E/2003/100.

03-41123* (E) 030703

(e) Recalling also General Assembly resolution 57/270 B of 20 December 2002, entitled "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields";

Have adopted the following declaration.

2. We are convinced that eradication of rural poverty and hunger is crucial for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. Rural development should be an integral part of national and international development policies, including bilateral donor response strategies and the activities and programmes of the United Nations system.

3. We express our serious concern regarding the famine facing millions of people, especially in Africa. Recognizing that food security is a global concern, we are committed to respond to the internationally recognized emergency food aid needs and to improve famine prevention mechanisms and long-term food security.

4. Rural development should be pursued through an integrated approach, encompassing the economic, social and environmental dimensions, taking into account the gender perspective and consisting of mutually reinforcing policies and programmes. This approach should be balanced, targeted, situation specific, locally owned, include local synergies and initiatives and be responsive to the needs of rural populations.

5. Rural development is the responsibility of each country and is predicated on an enabling national environment. An enabling international economic environment is important to support effective national development efforts, including rural development efforts. An enabling environment combines effective and coherent policies, good governance and accountable institutions at national and international levels as well as the promotion of gender equality and the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development. Robust, broad-based and equitable economic growth as well as human resource development are needed to fight rural poverty.

6. In this regard, despite serious efforts to achieve progress, important issues in the implementation of the Doha Ministerial Declaration of the World Trade Organization, adopted at Doha on 20 November 2001,[2] are still outstanding, in particular regarding the commitments under the said declaration for, inter alia, comprehensive negotiations aimed at substantial improvements in market access. In the agricultural sector, without prejudging the outcome of negotiations, reductions of, with a view to phasing out, all forms of export subsidies, substantial reduction in trade-distorting domestic support and enhanced market access is needed. We recall that special and differential treatment for developing countries shall be an integral part of all elements of the negotiations and shall be embodied in the schedules of concessions and commitments and as appropriate in the rules and disciplines to be negotiated, so as to be operationally effective and to enable developing countries to effectively take account of their development needs, including food security and rural development. We take note of the non-trade concerns reflected in the negotiating proposals submitted by members and confirm that non-trade concerns will be taken into account in the negotiations, as provided for in the Agreement of Agriculture.

7. As for non-agricultural products, we call for reduction or, as appropriate, removal of non-tariff barriers, tariff peaks, high tariffs and tariff escalation to enhance market access, in particular for products of export interest to developing countries.

8. These matters must be urgently addressed by members of the World Trade Organization in order to ensure full implementation of the Doha Ministerial Declaration, including regarding implementation issues and special and differential treatment, and to make a success of the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization to be held in Cancun, Mexico, in September 2003.

9. We invite members of the World Trade Organization to implement the commitments regarding trade-related technical assistance and capacity-building for developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, so that they can benefit from liberalized trade opportunities and adopt measures to reduce supply-side constraints, including by improving productivity and product diversification and enhancing competitiveness and community-based entrepreneurial capacity. We urge them to facilitate the accession of developing countries to the Organization, in particular the least developed countries and countries with economies in transition, taking into account the individual level of development of each country that applies for membership. In this regard, we welcome the recent agreement of the Organization to facilitate the accession of the least developed countries.

10. We recognize the vulnerability of the commodity-dependent developing countries, in particular the low-income countries, to market fluctuations and stress the need to support their efforts for the diversification of exports as a means of increasing export earnings and improving terms of trade and to address the impact of the instability of commodity prices. In this context, it is very important to empower commodity producers in developing countries to insure themselves against risk. We underscore the need for reforming the existing facilities to respond to the needs of the rural poor.

11. We urge developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product as official development assistance to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national product of developed countries to least developed countries, as reconfirmed at the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, and we encourage developing countries to build on progress achieved in ensuring that official development assistance is used effectively to help achieve development goals and targets. We acknowledge the efforts of all donors, commend those donors whose official development assistance contributions exceed, reach or are increasing towards the targets, and underline the importance of undertaking to examine the means and time frames for achieving the targets and goals.

12. Food security, rural and agricultural development must be adequately addressed in the context of national development and poverty eradication as well as in multilateral and bilateral donor response strategies. To that end, we deem it necessary to increase productive investment in rural and agricultural development to achieve lasting food security. We take note with satisfaction of the undertakings made by the members of the Group of Eight, as contained in the Action Plan against Famine, especially in Africa, adopted in Evian, France, on 3 June 2003, to work towards reversing the decline of official development assistance to agriculture and increasing trade opportunities for developing countries.

13. External debt relief can play a key role in liberating resources that can then be directed towards activities consistent with attaining sustainable growth and development, and therefore, debt relief measures should, where appropriate, be pursued vigorously and expeditiously, including within the Paris and London Clubs and other relevant forums. Noting the importance of re-establishing financial viability for those developing countries facing unsustainable debt burdens, we welcome initiatives that have been undertaken to reduce outstanding indebtedness and invite further national and international measures in that regard, including, as appropriate, debt cancellation and other arrangements.

14. We are committed to empowering poor women and men to play a full and effective role in their development by enabling them to have a larger voice in decision-making processes, including: resource allocation; promoting mechanisms, including the self-organization of poor people, to influence the market and public policies; and ensuring that poor rural people and their organizations have the opportunity to participate fully in the design, development and implementation of rural development strategies and programmes.

15. We are also committed to the empowerment of rural women at all levels and in all aspects of rural development, including agriculture, nutrition and food security, and to ensuring that the work of women is recognized and valued. We will ensure women's equal access to land, property, adequate housing, economic opportunity, credit, education, skills training and health care, economic welfare, the right to inheritance and the right to contractual agreements, as well as empowerment through full participation in decision-making at all levels.

16. We call for greater access to financial services and labour markets for the rural poor, in particular women, indigenous people and vulnerable groups, and to this end we undertake to simplify existing mechanisms and to facilitate the establishment and strengthening of rural financial institutions, including micro-credit, savings and insurance facilities and cooperative ventures for rural development, as well as the development of professional associations and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

17. We resolve to promote broad-based economic growth in developing countries and countries with economies in transition by strengthening sustainable agricultural and food policies, improving agricultural productivity, including for basic food commodities, and fostering non-farm rural economic activities.

18. We further resolve to enhance the livelihood of the rural poor by aiming to ensure that they have access to adequate quantities of safe and nutritious food and by creating productive and remunerative on- and off-farm employment opportunities, including through the diversification of the rural economy and employment-generating strategies. In this regard, we will encourage South-South cooperation, including the sharing of experiences and best practices.

19. We reaffirm that sustainable agriculture and rural development are essential to the implementation of an integrated approach to food security and safety in an environmentally sustainable way. We recognize the important role of rural populations in sustainably managing natural resources, including biodiversity, and in combating desertification and land degradation. We pledge to promote environmentally sound and sustainable natural resources management, including the implementation of integrated land management, sustainable forest management

programmes and water-use plans and the use of traditional and indigenous knowledge and practices as well as modern technologies of sustainable resource use and management. We also acknowledge the need, subject to national legislation, to implement actions at all levels to recognize the rights of local and indigenous communities that are holders of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices and, with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices, to develop and implement benefit-sharing mechanisms on mutually agreed terms for their use.

20. We commit ourselves to strengthening the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa and to addressing the causes of desertification and land degradation, in order to maintain and restore land, as well as poverty resulting from land degradation.

21. We recognize the key role of alternative development strategies for sustainable development of the rural areas affected by the illicit cultivation of narcotic plants and call for the promotion of such strategies.

22. We call for concrete steps at both the national and international levels to mobilize public and private investment as well as to enhance access to credit for the development of the physical rural infrastructure in order to enhance productivity and improve access to markets and information.

23. We recognize that research and its effective application are crucial for the development and implementation of appropriate new technologies that are pro-poor and raise on- and off-farm productivity. To that end, we underline the need for measures to increase investment in agricultural research, including modern technologies, natural resources management and capacity-building. We also call for measures to enhance and expand access to information and communication technologies in the rural areas of developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

24. We recognize the crucial importance of enhanced access of the rural poor, women and men, to productive assets, in particular land and water, and stress that priority attention should be given to the adoption of policies and the implementation of laws that guarantee well-defined and enforceable land- and water-use rights and promote legal security of tenure, recognizing the existence of different national laws and/or systems of land access and tenure.

25. We also call for enhanced access to social services for poor people in rural and remote areas. We are committed to improving access to quality education for the rural poor, especially the girl child, through increased investment and full utilization of modern techniques and technologies, including the establishment of remote education systems.

26. We recognize the critical link between HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, cholera, typhus and other serious diseases and rural development, as well as their negative impact on the agricultural sector. We also recognize the importance of health, including reproductive health, to: rural development and the eradication of poverty; reducing infant, child and maternal mortality; combating HIV/AIDS; and promoting equality and empowerment among the rural poor, especially women.

27. We emphasize that full implementation of the Doha Declaration on the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and public health, adopted by the World Trade Organization at Doha on 20 November 2001, [3] including its paragraph 6, is important for tackling public health problems, especially those resulting from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other epidemics.

28. We are deeply concerned about the devastating impact of the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, which undermines efforts to eradicate poverty. We recognize that HIV/AIDS has serious debilitating consequences for societies, particularly in Africa. We are therefore committed to the mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS concerns into rural development planning, including poverty eradication and food security strategies and multisectoral development activities covering economic and social aspects, taking into account the particular situation of rural women.

29. Bearing in mind that the majority of indigenous people live in rural areas, we recognize the need to implement policies and programmes to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development that are focused on them, taking into account their traditional knowledge and their special relationship with the land.

30. We reaffirm the goal of expanding access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, particularly in the rural areas of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and express our resolve to the expeditious realization of that goal, in accordance with the commitments contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.[4]

31. We also reaffirm the need to improve access to reliable, affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound energy services and resources, taking into account national specificities and circumstances, through various means, such as enhanced rural electrification and decentralized energy systems, increased use of renewables, cleaner liquid and gaseous fuels and enhanced energy efficiency, as well as by intensifying regional and international cooperation in support of national efforts, including through capacity-building, financial and technological assistance and innovative financing mechanisms, including at the micro- and meso-levels, recognizing the specific factors for providing access to the poor.

32. We undertake to promote rural-urban linkages by developing and strengthening a system of intermediate-size secondary and tertiary towns to stimulate rural development, as well as to minimize the negative impacts of rural-urban migration. At the same time, we will encourage programmes and policies designed to strengthen rural service centre and small town systems, including strengthening institutions and mechanisms for local or regional planning.

33. We are committed to responding effectively to Africa's special needs for achieving sustainable development and to lending our full support to the development and implementation of national policies and programmes for rural development in Africa. To this end, we reiterate our support for the priorities of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the call to channel financial, technical and other types of resources towards the priorities of the New Partnership, in particular infrastructural development, health services, education, water and agriculture. We underline the importance of implementing the initiatives contained

in the New Partnership, in particular those designed to enhance market access and the diversification of production in African economies, which are vulnerable because of their dependence on primary production and natural resources-based sectors.

34. We recognize the special needs of the least developed countries and reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of outcomes of the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, in particular the elements related to rural development, enhanced market access and provision for enhanced technical assistance and support for capacity-building.

35. Recognizing also the special challenges in rural development faced by small island developing States, we reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and emphasize in this regard the importance of the international meeting to be held in Mauritius in 2004. Noting also that the geographical situation of the landlocked developing countries is an added constraint on their efforts to promote rural development, we call for the implementation of specific actions related to the particular needs of those countries.

36. We underline the importance of partnerships at the national and international levels to foster collaboration among actors in different sectors. At the national and local levels, we will encourage local authorities, civil society, the private sector and local communities to launch partnerships that support and promote rural development. At the international level, we will facilitate and nurture alliances of Governments, donors, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector for the promotion of integrated rural development.

37. We welcome the work of the organizations of the United Nations system in eradicating rural poverty and promoting rural development and urge them to ensure that measures are implemented to simplify, harmonize and integrate assessment procedures and programming so as to reduce transaction costs and avoid additional procedural requirements for programme countries and enhance support for their efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, especially those contained in the Millennium Declaration. We emphasize that national and international poverty reduction strategies should target rural areas and households more systematically by integrating poverty eradication and food security as well as environmental objectives more firmly in poverty reduction strategy papers, where they exist, as well as in common country assessments and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. We urge the international and regional financial institutions to enhance their support for rural poverty eradication and rural development in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

38. We commit ourselves to the implementation of the present declaration and call upon civil society, the organizations of the United Nations system and other relevant actors and organizations to lend their full support to the realization of the objectives of integrated rural development for poverty eradication and sustainable development. We agree to review progress or lack thereof in the implementation of the present declaration at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in 2005.

Notes

[1] E/2003/51.

[2] WT/MIN (01)/DEC/1.

[3] WT/MIN (01)/DEC/2.

[4] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.